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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/842,894	04/27/2001	Hiroko Shimizu	1341.1092	7590
21171	7590	05/30/2006	EXAMINER	
STAAS & HALSEY LLP SUITE 700 1201 NEW YORK AVENUE, N.W. WASHINGTON, DC 20005			SING, SIMON P	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2614	

DATE MAILED: 05/30/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/842,894	SHIMIZU ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Simon Sing	2614	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 March 2006.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 9,11-16 and 19-21 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 9,11-16 and 19-21 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ .	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

1. Regarding claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Price US 6,389,132.

Price discloses a method for sending an inquiry from a customer to a call center in figures 1 and 2. Price teaches:

transmitting, from a user graphical interface or web page, a text question including selected media and customer's information, to be queued in a contact server 20 for next available agent (column 4, lines 66-67; column 5, lines 20-23); and answering, by an available agent, the inquiry by text, or voice selected by the customer (column 5, lines 31-33; column 6, lines 54-59).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 9, 11-16, 19 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Price US 6,389,132 in view of Hammond US 5,479,487.

1.1 Regarding claim 9, Price discloses a multi-tasking call center 28 in figure 1, comprising:

at least one customer (client) terminal 12 comprising a telephone and a computer, the call center 28 is accessible by the computer via Internet 14 and a Web Server 18 (Figure 1; column 3, lines 57-65), or by said telephone via PTSN 16 with an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) unit, for making an inquiry (column 1, lines 5-8; column 2, lines 62-67; column 3, lines 1-10, 35-43, 60-61),

at least one agent (operator) terminal through which an agent receives the inquiry from the customer (Figure 1; column 3, lines 16-26, 35-36; column 4, lines 1-2, 11-15); and

a contact server 20 connected to said customer terminal and agent terminal (Figure 1; column 3, lines 66-67; column 5, lines 3-10);

the customer terminal including:

a graphical user interface (call center's web page on the computer's display) which allows the customer to post a text question (content of an inquiry) (column 5, lines 3-4) and to select a communication medium to be used when receiving an answer from the agent, the media comprising a

voice call and an e-mail, for example, the customer may request an answer via web voice call by posting his/her telephone number (information related to the customer) (column 6, lines 28-32) or via an e-mail by posting his/her e-mail address (information related to the customer) via a text connection (column 7, lines 38-41); and

a transmission unit which transmits the information related to the communication media selected by the user, the contents of the inquiry, and information related to the user to said server by interacting with the web page (column 3, lines 1-3, 57-58, 60-61; column 5, lines 1-4);

said server includes:

a queue-managing unit which queue-manages inquiries in which the user has either selected a telephone calls or an e-mail as communication medium for receiving the answer (column 3, lines 62-67; column 4, lines 16-18; column 7, lines 32-41); and

a processing unit (contact server 20) which successively processes the inquiries in a queue on said agent terminal (column 3, line 66 to column 4, line 2; column 5, lines 6-10).

Price teaches a customer may post a text question on a web page (column 5, lines 1-4), click on a “voice request button” (column 6, lines 41-43) or an entity email button (column 7, lines 41-46) on a web for posting a question and customer information, and requesting either voice or text response to the inquiry. Price further teaches a user interface for displaying customer information and inquiry (column 3, lines 18-21), but fails to teach forwarding a question from a first agent to a second agent and

having split screen displays on agent terminals, i.e. displaying user information in one screen and inquiry in another screen.

However, Hammond discloses a call center in that a live gent may transfer a call, with related data, to another agent or a supervisor (column 12, lines 36-42).

Since placing user information and the inquiry in one display screen or two would have been a design choice, therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the Price's reference with the teaching of Hammond, so that an incoming inquiry would have been forwarded to a supervisor terminal, because such a modification would have enable a agent to pass a particular inquiry to his/her supervisor in case the agent was unable or unauthorized to answer the particular inquiry.

2.2 Regarding claim 11, Price teaches managing the queue based on available agents (predetermined rule) (column 3, lines 31-34; column 4, lines 8-10), or with a set of predefined business rules (column 8, lines 41-64).

2.3 Regarding claim 12, Price teaches different communication media for making the request and receiving the answer, for example, a customer may use the computer to make a text inquiry (column 5, lines 1-4), and requests an answer via voice call (column 6, lines 28-32).

2.4 Regarding claim 13, as discussed in claim 9, Price teaches that a customer may use a computer to access the call center's web-page to post a text question, and request response by voice or email.

2.5 Regarding claim 19, as discussed in claim 9, the web page of the modified Price reference comprises an area for inputting a text question, a telephone number and an email address.

2.6 Regarding claims 14 and 21, Price discloses a method for receiving an inquiry from a customer terminal, giving an answer to the inquiry through an agent terminal, said customer terminal comprising a telephone and a computer capable to access homepages or to send and receive e-mails (Figure 1; column 3, lines 57-61; column 4, lines 7-15; column 7, lines 30-46). Price teaches:

selecting a communication medium to be used when receiving said answer from an agent terminal, such as a voice callback or an email (column 6, lines 28-32; column 7, lines 38-41), allowing the communication medium selected to be different from the one that making inquiry, for example, a customer may use the computer to make text inquiry (content of an inquiry) through a web page (graphical user interface) (column 5, lines 1-4), input customer related information (telephone number or e-mail address), and request an answer via a web voice call (column 6, lines 28-32);

transmitting information related to the communication medium selected by the user, the contents of the inquiry and information related to the user to a server (column 5, lines 1-4; column 16, lines 28-32; column 7, lines 38-41);

queue-managing (providing control to successively processing, i.e. first come first serve) the inquiry in which the user has either selected a telephone calls or an e-mail as communication medium for receiving the answer (column 3, lines 27-35, 62-65; column 4, lines 1-10, column 6, lines 21-27); and

communicating with the customer terminal using the communication medium selected when answering the inquiry (column 4, lines 16-18; column 6, lines 28-32; column 7, lines 32-46).

Price teaches a customer may post a text question on a web page (column 5, lines 1-4), click on a “voice request button” (column 6, lines 41-43) or an entity email button (column 7, lines 41-46) on a web for posting a question and customer information, and requesting either voice or text response to the inquiry. Price further teaches a user interface for displaying customer information and inquiry (column 3, lines 18-21), but fails to teach forwarding a question from a first agent to a second agent and having split screen displays on agent terminals, i.e. displaying user information in one screen and inquiry in another screen.

However, Hammond discloses a call center in that a live gent may transfer a call, with related data, to another agent or a supervisor (column 12, lines 36-42).

Since placing user information and the inquiry in one display screen or two would have been a design choice, therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary

skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the Price's reference with the teaching of Hammond, so that an incoming inquiry would have been forwarded to a supervisor terminal, because such a modification would have enable a agent to pass a particular inquiry to his/her supervisor in case the agent was unable or unauthorized to answer the particular inquiry.

2.7 Regarding claims 15 and 16, Price discloses a method for receiving an inquiry from a customer terminal, giving an answer to the inquiry to the customer through an agent terminal, said customer terminal comprising a telephone and a computer capable to access homepages or to send and receive e-mails (Figure 1; column 3, lines 57-61; column 4, lines 7-15; column 7, lines 30-46). Since Price's system utilizes servers 18-22 and computers (both user and agent terminals), inherently it has computer programs for:

displaying a graphical user interface (an interactive web page) on said customer terminal so that a customer can select a communication medium to be used when receiving a the answer from an agent terminal, such as a voice call or an email (column 6, lines 28-32; column 7, lines 38-41), and for inputting a question (content of inquiry) and customer related information (telephone number or e-mail address), and allowing the communication medium selected to be different from a the one that making inquiry, such that when the customer using the computer to make an inquiry through a Internet connection to the call center's web page, the customer may request an answer via voice call (column 6, lines 28-32);

transmitting information related to the communication medium selected by the user, from the customer terminal, the contents of the inquiry and information related to the user to a server (column 5, lines 1-4; column 6, lines 28-32; column 7, lines 38-41);

queue-managing (providing control to successively processing) the inquiry in which the user has either selected a telephone calls or an e-mail as communication medium for receiving the answer (column 3, lines 27-35, 62-65; column 4, lines 1-10; column 7, lines 32-41); and

communicating with the customer terminal using the communication medium selected when answering the inquiry (column 4, lines 16-18; column 6, lines 28-31; column 7, lines 32-46).

Price teaches a customer may post a text question on a web page (column 5, lines 1-4), click on a “voice request button” (column 6, lines 41-43) or an entity email button (column 7, lines 41-46) on a web for posting a question and customer information, and requesting either voice or text response to the inquiry. Price further teaches a user interface for displaying customer information and inquiry (column 3, lines 18-21), but fails to teach forwarding a question from a first agent to a second agent and having split screen displays on agent terminals, e.g. displaying user information in one screen and inquiry in another screen.

However, Hammond discloses a call center in that a live gent may transfer a call to another agent or a supervisor (column 12, lines 36-42).

Since placing user information and the inquiry in one display screen or two would have been a design choice, therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary

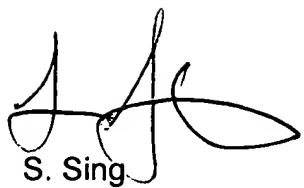
skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the Price's reference with the teaching of Hammond, so that an incoming inquiry would have been forwarded to a supervisor terminal, because such a modification would have enable a agent to pass a particular inquiry to his/her supervisor in case the agent was unable or unauthorized to answer the particular inquiry.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 9, 11-16 and 19-21 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communication from the examiner should be directed to Simon Sing whose telephone number is 571-272-7545. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Fan Tsang, can be reached at 571-272-7547. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 571-272-2600.



S. Sing.

03/23/2006



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